

# EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## *Riverdale, South Chicago Heights, Chicago Heights, and Dolton/Lansing, IL*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the Village of Riverdale for a Brownfields Pilot. Riverdale is partnering with the South Suburban Chicago Brownfields Coalition (SSCBC), which consists of cooperative partners including the Village of South Chicago Heights, City of Chicago Heights, Village of Dolton, the Village of Lansing, and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, a consortium of mayors and city managers from 38 municipalities in the south suburban Chicago. These communities are located in one of the nation's key industrial strongholds. The drastic loss of industry in this region, peaking in the 1970s and early 1980s, has created pockets of economically distressed communities and thousands of acres of brownfields properties. In some communities of the south suburbs the unemployment rate is as high as 20 percent, while the percentage of minority populations reaches more than 99 percent. One municipality represented by the consortium, the Ford Heights community, qualifies as America's poorest suburb, with a poverty rate of 49 percent. Although the number of industries, as well as residents, has decreased, the region is poised for redevelopment and economic renewal with its excellent freight transportation infrastructure and remaining industrial clusters.

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Riverdale, IL*

**Date of Announcement:**  
May 2000

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The Riverdale Pilot will target brownfields sites in the south suburban Chicago region for assessment and cleanup.

#### Contacts:

Riverdale  
(708) 841-2200

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 5  
(312) 353-3161

Visit the EPA Region 5 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/R5Brownfields/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

## OBJECTIVES

The Pilot's primary objectives are to create an inventory of area brownfields properties, prioritize and target properties for assessment and cleanup; perform environmental assessments at targeted sites, establish a web site to inform communities and other interested parties of brownfields sites, and conduct community outreach and solicit community involvement. The award of EPA funding will leverage additional city, state, and federal funds for brownfields assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment activities.

These Pilot activities will also contribute to SSCBC's long-term goals, which include building a regional partnership around brownfields redevelopment among south suburban municipalities to achieve collective results, using the south suburban region's existing assets as building blocks for brownfields revitalization and economic renewal, and producing a model for brownfields identification, assessment, cleanup and redevelopment that provides a framework for future projects.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Compiling a comprehensive inventory, including geographic information system (GIS) mapping and site profiles, of south suburban brownfields properties;
- Prioritizing and targeting brownfields properties for assessment and cleanup;
- Conducting Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments at targeted brownfields properties; and
- Involving community representatives, especially those in environmental justice communities, in decision-making processes regarding brownfields assessment and cleanup.

*The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.*